



## Welcome!

BY JEFF LAFATA-HERNANDEZ

Spring is finally here! Warmer weather is on the way, bringing new opportunities to connect with our community, our work, and the people we serve. We hope this latest issue of DJ Times offers you fresh resources and insights as we move into a season of growth and change.



## Accessible Sports - Welcome to the Bleachers!

BY JONATHAN ALPERT

Welcome to the bleachers. My name is Jonathan Alpert and I am a diehard sports fan, especially for our Boston Red Sox.

The Red Sox season pitched on in Cincinnati on March 26<sup>th</sup> and I am wicked excited! The Bruins and Celtics will be shooting for seeds in the playoffs.

I'm sure you would love to attend a game at Fenway Park or at the Garden. However, you have a disability and are unsure if the stadium has disability seating and if they do, how can you purchase them? I am really glad you ask!

- **Boston Red Sox – Fenway Park** – Phone: 617-226-6197 – TTY: 617-226-6644
- **Boston Celtics / Boston Bruins – TD Garden** – Phone: 617-624-2327 – TTY: Not listed ([blog.disabilityinfo.org](http://blog.disabilityinfo.org))
- **New England Patriots – Gillette Stadium** – Phone: 508-384-9191 – TTY / Relay: 800-439-2370
- **New England Revolution – Gillette Stadium** – Phone: 508-384-9191 – TTY / Relay: 800-439-2370

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# Local Arts + Culture - Unlock Your Next Adventure with "Card to Culture"

BY CHARLIE WARREN

Did you know your EBT, WIC, or ConnectorCare card is also a ticket to some of the coolest spots in Massachusetts?

Through a program called Card to Culture, you can visit museums, theaters, and gardens for free or just a few dollars. It's all about making sure everyone can enjoy the best arts and culture our state has to offer.

## How to Use It:

- **Pick a Spot:** From the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem to the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, hundreds of places participate.
- **Show Your Card:** When you arrive at the ticket booth, simply show your EBT, WIC, or ConnectorCare card.
- **Enjoy the Discount:** Most places offer Free entry or a small fee of \$2 per person.

## Three Places to Visit This Spring:

- **Peabody Essex Museum (Salem):** Explore massive art galleries and historic houses for Free.
- **New England Aquarium (Boston):** See the penguins and giant sea turtles for just \$2.
- **Museum of Science (Boston):** Discover amazing exhibits and dinosaurs for only \$2.

Want to find more? Scan the list of all participating locations at [MassCulturalCouncil.org](https://www.massculturalcouncil.org).

# Accessible Recreation - Accessibility at the Movies!

BY MELISSA STROUT

There are many great movies in the works for this spring and summer. We wanted to highlight some of the ways everyone can enjoy the theater together.

Here are some of the accessibility options at a number of theaters:

- sensory friendly settings with the lights on and the sound volume turned down
- closed captioning
- descriptive narration
- assisted listening devices
- companion seating
- accessible seating

Be sure to check with your local theater for their accessibility options and showtimes.

Enjoy the movies!

# Disability History - The Students Who Sparked the Willowbrook Exposé

BY KASSI SOULARD

In 1972, the public learned about the abusive conditions inside the Willowbrook State School in New York. While many remember the televised exposé by journalist Geraldo Rivera, fewer know that it was a group of student volunteers who first brought attention to what was happening inside.

Students from the SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement through Volunteer Experience) program at Staten Island Community College had been volunteering at Willowbrook and were alarmed by the overcrowding, lack of care, and unsafe living conditions. They documented what they saw, shared their findings with families and advocates, and pushed state officials to allow outside scrutiny. Their early efforts helped open the door for journalists to enter the institution and bring national attention to the issue.

The outrage that followed led to lawsuits, reforms, and eventually the closure of Willowbrook. These students' actions remind us that disability rights history is shaped not only by major laws, but also by everyday people who refuse to look away.

# Assistive Technology - Fidget Tools

BY ETHAN LINKSY

The assistive technology highlight of this issue will be an item that many do not automatically categorize as technology: fidget tools. There's a common misconception that fidgeting is a sign of distraction or disinterest. In reality, for many people, it's the opposite. Purposeful, controlled fidgeting can help the brain stay alert, process information more effectively, and stay engaged during tasks and conversations.

By normalizing the use of quiet, professional fidget tools, workplaces can become more inclusive and supportive of different focus styles and sensory needs. What might seem like a small tool can significantly impact productivity, comfort, and overall well-being.

Fidget tools are not just for classrooms; they are practical and effective supports for today's work environments. With more options that are discreet and silent, it's easier than ever to include fidgeting in your daily routine without disturbing others.

Below are some examples of fidget tools that work well for people in highly active offices:



- **Magnetic Fidget Tools:** Magnetic fidgets use small, high-quality magnets to create smooth, repetitive motions. These fidgets provide consistent tactile feedback that feels satisfying without making noise. Their subtle movement makes them ideal for meetings or focused desk work.



- **Fidget Rings with Silent Bearings:** At a glance, these look like ordinary rings. In reality, they contain a rotating inner band supported by tiny, silent bearings. You can spin the ring discreetly during meetings or conversations, keeping your hands engaged while maintaining full attention—without anyone noticing.



- **Tangle Toys (Rubberized or Fabric Versions):** Tangle toys are made of interconnected segments that twist and turn endlessly. Softer, rubberized or fabric-covered versions minimize sound, offering a soothing tactile experience. They're especially useful for keeping hands busy during long calls or presentations.



- **Therapy Putty or Kneadable Erasers:** Soft and moldable, therapy putty and kneadable erasers provide completely silent sensory input. They can be stretched, squeezed, or rolled under the desk, helping release tension and improve focus without any visual or auditory distraction.



- **Fidget Pens with Silent Mechanisms:** These tools double as everyday writing instruments. With sleek designs and quiet click, twist, or roll features, they provide subtle sensory feedback between tasks. Because they look like standard pens, they blend seamlessly into any professional setting.



- **Weighted Hand Rolls or Stress Stones:** For those who benefit from grounding rather than movement, weighted tools offer a calming alternative. Simply holding or gently rubbing a stress stone can help anchor attention and reduce anxiety—completely silently.



- **Textured Fabric Swatches:** Sometimes, the simplest tools are the most discreet. Small swatches of fabric—such as velvet, corduroy, or fleece—can be kept in a pocket and rubbed between fingers. With no visible movement, they provide sensory input in a way that's virtually undetectable to others.

# Accessible Meditation - It's All About Choice and Flexibility!

BY KRYSTAL LINN

Meditation is often pictured as sitting still, eyes closed, and focusing on breathing, but for many people, especially those with disabilities, trauma histories, chronic pain, ADHD, or anxiety, traditional meditation may feel frustrating or inaccessible. Accessible meditation focuses on choice, flexibility, and meeting people where they are. Fortunately, there are many apps, teachers, and resources that make meditation more inclusive and approachable.

## Accessible Meditation Apps

- **Insight Timer.** Personally, Insight Timer is my go-to meditation app. The free version has a lot of features, including recorded and live meditations, classes, music, and even yoga sessions. There are thousands of recorded meditations, music tracks, and talks from teachers all over the world. You can search by topic such as anxiety, sleep, trauma, or focus. When I searched for accessible meditation, many beginner, accessible, and disability-related meditations and talks came up. You can also search by meditation length, topic, and even language. The timer feature allows you to set your own meditation time if you prefer a silent practice.
- **UCLA Mindful App.** The UCLA Mindful App is a free, easy-to-use app created by the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center. It offers basic meditations in 17 different languages, including American Sign Language. The app includes a section called “Health and Wellness Meditations,” which are designed for people in hospitals or those experiencing health challenges. Beginners can watch videos about how to get started, supportive meditation postures, and the science behind meditation. The app also includes weekly recordings from live and virtual meditation sessions and a timer for personal practice.

Other Options:

- **Smiling Mind** – Free app with programs for adults, teens, and children
- **Medito** – Completely free nonprofit meditation app
- **Headspace or Calm** – Beginner-friendly guided meditation and sleep support

Many of these apps offer short meditations (1–5 minutes), body scans, sleep meditations, and movement-based mindfulness practices, which are often more accessible than traditional seated meditation.

## Accessible Meditation Teachers

- **Tara Brach** is a psychologist and meditation teacher known for self-compassion and trauma-informed meditation practices. She developed the RAIN meditation technique (Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture), which is widely used in emotional regulation and trauma-informed mindfulness.
- **Jeff Warren** teaches meditation specifically for people who struggle with traditional meditation, including people with ADHD, anxiety, and busy minds. His work focuses on flexible meditation styles such as walking meditation, sensory meditation, and curiosity-based mindfulness.

Other accessible meditation teachers to explore include:

- Sharon Salzberg (lovingkindness meditation)
- Thich Nhat Hanh (walking meditation and everyday mindfulness)
- Jon Kabat-Zinn (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction)

# Anti-Ableism Resources & Tips

BY JEFF LAFATA-HERNANDEZ

We often discuss how systems of oppression, like ableism and racism, intersect and reinforce each other. One common example of this in disability services is how ableism and adultism intersect and affect the people we serve, regardless of their age.

Ableism is a system of advantage and discrimination based on ability or perceived ability.

Adultism is a system of advantage and discrimination rooted in age, especially involving the oppression of young people by adults.

You might wonder how adultism affects our work at Triangle, given that most of the people we serve are adults. Well, a common result of ableism is infantilization or treating people with disabilities, regardless of their age, like children. This can be a significant barrier for people with disabilities in all aspects of life, especially when seeking employment.

So, what actions can we take at Triangle to challenge this rather than perpetuate it?

- 1. Language is important!** Remember that none of the programs at Triangle serve children, and our language should reflect that. Even programs that serve young people are not working with children; instead, they work with youth, young adults, teens, and so on. Our language should mirror this, and we need to lead by example when others refer to Triangle participants as “kids” or “children”.
- 2. Tone of voice:** We've all seen it! When we go out into the community and someone starts talking to a person we serve in a tone that treats them like a small child. At Triangle, we want to make sure we are leading by example once again. We all make mistakes and should aim to correct them. This also provides an opportunity to discuss with participants how interactions like this make them feel and how to handle them in the future.
- 3. Culture:** At Triangle, we foster a culture of empowerment for the individuals we serve. This always includes treating people as the adults they are. From how we speak to and about people to how we run our programming, working as a team to constantly evaluate the programming we design ensures it meets individual needs in an age-appropriate way. This approach is vital to our mission.

Challenging issues of oppression is a lifelong journey, and I am proud to be part of an organization that recognizes this work and continues striving to be a place of empowerment. Remember that we all make mistakes and have the opportunity to learn from and correct those mistakes. I hope that these tips help you to continue this work.



Want to join the DJTF?  
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